(e) Prior to the war, Iraq produced about 3% of global crude output. India has not lifted oil directly from Iraq since December, 2000. There has been no disruption in the import of crude oil by India on account of war. India has adequate foreign exchange reserves to meet any short term rise in crude oil prices.

Indo-German Agreement

3654.DR.AKHILESHDAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the German President recently visited New Delhi.

(b) if so, the agreement to MOUs signed during the visit for closer ties between the two countries; and

(c) whether he supported India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Dr. Johannes Rau, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, paid a State visit to India from 2-7 March, 2003. The Memorandum of Understanding on an Indo-German Institute for Advanced Technology to be set up in Vishakapatnam, which was signed during the visit, indicates the close cooperation between the two countries in education and science.

(c) In a press interview on 3rd March, 2003, President Rau said that given the role India plays in today's world, India is a natural candidate for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

Re-negotiation on Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty

3655. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any talks have been held with Nepal for re-negotiating the existing Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty and extradition treaty; and

(b) if so, the progress made, so far, in this regard alongwith the details of the new treaties, if any, since negotiated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b)The Indo-Nepal Trade Treaty